

FIVE-MINUTE SERMONS.

First Sunday After Epiphany.

VANITY OF EARTHLY THINGS.

Human nature is pretty much the same in all ages of time, and I am quite sure that the Apostle, if he were living now, would repeat the same charge to us. By "this world" he means the aims, motives, and deeds which human nature will, of itself, propose and perform to secure what it looks upon as necessary or desirable for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, when not enlightened and guided by divine grace.

You will hear on every side people who say: "We live in the world, we are men of the world, and although we have faith in and know of duties towards a higher destiny, we must conform ourselves to the ways of the world or we would be left behind, unfitted to take part in the hours and riches, and learning, and other desirable things which are to be had in the world."

Now, as many as 1,400 years before the birth of Our Saviour, the Prophet Balaam, in this very land had said: "A star shall rise out of Jacob, a sceptre shall spring up from Israel."

And all the people of India who heard this prophecy looked eagerly for the star which was to announce the birth of the great ruler.

And behold, after many years a star arose, as brilliant as the sun, and to be seen by all, for it hovered day and night over the mountain like a glorious eagle, and departed not for three days, but even outshone it. And in the midst of the star could be seen the figure of a little child and also a cross; and a voice came forth from it saying:

"To-day is born the king of Jews, the Expectation of Nations, the Ruler of the World."

Now you must know that the land of India was divided into three kingdoms many leagues apart.

One kingdom was governed by Melchior, the king who brought Our Saviour an offering of gold, another by Balthassar, who offered Him frankincense, and the third by Gaspar, who made an offering of myrrh.

Each one rose up, and donning his costliest raiment, summoned the great men of his court, and with canals and noble steeds in richest trappings, and laden with precious gifts, set out in quest of the new-born Child.

And the glorious star, which preceded them, shone, even at night, like the noonday sun, drying up the marshes, and lighting gloomy forests like an open plain so that there was naught to stop the kings on their way; neither they nor their people halted to eat or rest, but kept on till they reached the crib of Our Saviour and offered Him their homage and their gifts.

Then only would they seek rest and refreshment for man and beast. And strange to relate, though the journey lasted thirteen days, from the 25th of December to the 6th of January, it seemed to them as if it had ended only from sunrise to sunset. Thus is Our Saviour wont to lighten and shorten labors conducted with a right good will.

The three kings met just outside the entrance to Jerusalem, and on learning that it was even the same quest which brought them all, embraced one another right heartily and rode joyously abreast through the gates. Then they met Herod, who, the Gospel tells us, was an arrogant knave, and sought to use the holy men for his own base ends.

As they neared Bethlehem certain shepherds fell in with the royal train, and could talk of nothing but the wonderful music they had heard on Christmas night, the glorious tidings proclaimed by an angel, and the wonderful Child that was born in a manger. The three travellers listened with beating hearts, and parted not from the shepherds till they had rewarded them right royally.

No doubt you would find some what of the exterior countenance and bearing of these three holy men, but more I may not tell you than that Melchior, who brought the offering of gold to Our Saviour, was short of stature, Balthassar, of middle height, and Gaspar, the tallest and most powerful of the three was black, at which we need not marvel, for had not the prophet said:

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

LEGEND OF THE THREE KINGS.

BY ELLA MACMAHON.

Epiphany is one of the oldest feasts of the Church, and in many places was wont to be celebrated with even greater pomp than Christmas; in fact, in the Middle Ages it was considered the greatest feast of the year for the reason that Our Saviour by calling the three Wise Men to His crib manifested Himself to the Gentiles and proclaimed Himself the Saviour of the whole world.

The three kings have ever been regarded with veneration and devotion by the faithful, notwithstanding Holy Scripture tells us little more of them than the one great fact of their lives, their beautiful fidelity to the divine call of grace. There is no mention in the Gospel of their kingly dignity, of whence they come, nor of any detail that throws any light upon their history subsequent to their visit to Jerusalem.

Hence there has been a large field for pious legend and tradition. The following is an epitome of the chief legends on the subject which have come down to us from the early centuries, and many of its details are uncontradicted by history and the Fathers.

There was a great mountain in India called the Mount of Light, and on its summit the people built a high tower and stationed watchmen therein, lest, perchance, the enemy come upon them unforseen, or any marvel in the heavens escape the knowledge of the great seers of the nation.

Now, as many as 1,400 years before the birth of Our Saviour, the Prophet Balaam, in this very land had said: "A star shall rise out of Jacob, a sceptre shall spring up from Israel."

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"Coram illo procedent Athiopes: "Before Him the Ethiopians shall fall down."

On the thirteenth day of their journey they found the Divine Child wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying on a little straw, and beside Him stood Mary His Mother, and her holy spouse, St. Joseph.

are they had brought, but offered themselves as humble vassals to the Infant Majesty before them.

Then Melchior presented thirty pieces of bright gold and a golden apple; Balthassar, frankincense, and Gaspar, myrrh.

The golden apple which Melchior offered had once been in the possession of the great king and hero, Alexander of Macedon. He had had it made to represent the world which he had conquered, and he had bidden the artisan to fashion it out of set gold that it might take any shape under his royal hand—this was to proclaim that he ruled the world he had conquered, and could bend great kingdoms and mighty empires to his will. But when the golden bauble was placed in the hands of the divine Child it turned to ashes, to show that all earthly grandeur and power are as dust before God, and to dust must needs return.

An angel of the Lord visited the kings in their sleep, and bade them avoid the perfidious Herod, and they went not near the knave, but returned home by another route.

After a two years' journey they reached again the Mount of Light, and on its summit forthwith they erected a magnificent temple to the young king, to whose service they had vowed themselves as willing vassals.

At the foot of the Mount of Light lies the city of Stulla, and here the kings, before separating, chose a common place of burial where they all might lie.

Then each went to his own kingdom, and ceased not to proclaim the fulfillment of the great prophecy. And so it came about that many pagan temples adopted the device of the child accompanied with a cross; and when he sought its meaning he was told the tale of the three Kings and their journey to Jerusalem.

St. Thomas was overjoyed and went at once in search of these earliest servants of his Divine Master. When he met them he found their hearts were well prepared for the Divine Word, and but a short time elapsed ere they and all their people were baptized.

The faithful Wise Men were thenceforth filled with the Holy Spirit, and in their holy zeal and ardor for the Gospel fell no whit short of St. Thomas himself. Therefore the Apostles took them as his fellow laborers, and ordained them priests, for the legend runs that they were unmarried and vowed to holy chastity.

Meanwhile St. Thomas went from province to province converting prince and peoples, destroying idols, until finally he won the crown of martyrdom.

After his death the three kings chose a spiritual and temporal ruler for the land, and retired to the city of Stulla. Two years later, a few days before Christmas, a beautiful star appeared in the heavens, and a something told the holy servants it was a harbinger of the great deliverer, death, and that they were soon to be united with their Master.

And so in truth it proved. King Melchior went first on the eighth day after Christmas, in the one hundred and sixteenth year of his age, just as he had finished celebrating the Holy Sacrifice, and Gaspar in like manner seven days later in his one hundred and ninth year. And when his people carried him to the common grave which the three had chosen, Melchior and Balthassar drew apart that Gaspar might rest between them. And the star continued over the grave until the holy remains were separated, which came about in this wise: the people of the three kingdoms fell out, whereupon each took his sovereign to his own land and buried him anew with great pomp and ceremony in their respective kingdoms.

Thus the holy servants of God, who were so united in life and would find not separated in death, continued in separate tombs until the third century, when the great Empress St. Helen, who found the True Cross, and built so many churches and cloisters, journeyed to India expressly to obtain the holy relics.

The bodies of Melchior and Balthassar were presented to her, but the body of Gaspar had fallen into the hands of unbelievers, who refused to give it up. Nevertheless, they were finally induced to give it in exchange for the body of St. Thomas.

The Empress carried the relics to the capital of Greece, the city of Constantinople which was built by her glorious son, Constantine.

In the city is the great Cathedral of St. Sophia, so large that the tallest masted ship with full sails could turn at ease in it. Here the three Kings were reverently enshrined by the holy Empress, and many miracles were wrought at their tomb.

At this point the pious legend loses its mythical character, and assumes the sober mien of history, and we are told that in the 12th century the remains of the three kings were transported to Milan, and that in 1162, when the city was destroyed by Frederick Barbarossa, the relics were given to Archbishop Rainald, of Cologne, which city, because of these and many other holy relics, was called the German Rome, or the holy city. They

now rest in the grand Cologne Cathedral in a golden shrine studded with no less than 1,540 precious stones.—Catholic Fireside.

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

To reach the goal of earthly success is the worst ambition of the heart. This can be done only by throwing aside the works of darkness and putting on the armor of light. In a natural sense, the armor of light is truth and activity; and no character has both, without being wise, just, honest, temperate, industrious and frugal. These qualities light up the way of the youth, lead him into the paths of happiness and prosperity, and conduct him to the home of success.—The New World.

Right and True. Do what you feel to be right, say what you think to be true, and leave with faith and patience the consequences to God.

Easy to Find. There are two things, each of which he will seldom fail to discover who seeks for it in earnest—the knowledge of what he ought to do, and a plausible pretext for doing what he likes.

The Successful Man. "The successful man," said Gratebar, "is by no means helpful to himself alone; he helps a great lot of other people as well. There isn't a healthy, vigorous, energetic, self-reliant, successful man whose example does not breed the same qualities in others, and personal contact with such a man is an active stimulant and direct aid to success. He awakens in us new strength, and arouses ambition. He winds us up, and sets us going. So to it, my friend, that you don't run down."

Stimulating. Nothing is more healthfully stimulating than a genuine love for the pursuit in which one is engaged. Every gain in it is a fresh excitement. Each new method adopted, each new experiment tried, each new tool tested, each new discovery made, is a message of present delight and spur to future effort. But he who drags along an uninteresting succession of days, in which his work is only compelled drudgery, is deprived alike of incentive and pleasure.

Learn to Talk Before an Audience. Join a society and talk. It doesn't matter so much what you talk about, whether it is the constitution of the society or the speeches of Demosthenes, but talk, get on your feet, think on your feet, get over the horrible self-consciousness and witless stampe of every idea. Learn to express yourself and then take up subjects that have a practical application to the life of the world we live in. The glittering generalities of the pseudo-orator are going a glimmering. Talk sound sense just as soon as you find your tongue and can manage it, but begin anywhere. Now is a good time to form debating societies.

Aim High. Aim at something great; aim at things which are difficult—and there are no great things which are not difficult. Do not pare down your undertakings to what you can hope to see successful in the next few years, or in the years of your own life. Fear not the reproach of Quixotism or fanaticism in your own life; but after you have well weighed what you undertake, and are convinced that you are right, go forward, even at the risk of being torn to pieces by the very men that whose changed hearts your purpose will one day be accomplished. Fight on with all your strength, against whatever odds, and with however small a band of supporters.—John Stuart Mill.

Chances. While ten men watch for chances one man makes chances; while ten men wait for something to turn up one turns something up; so while ten fail one succeeds, and is called a man of luck—the favorite of fortune. There is no luck like pluck, and fortune most favors those who are most indifferent to fortune and keep to the line of duty.

To be Shapely and Strong. The man who exercises at all kinds of physical exercises and competes but little in any of them, who does his work daily for health and fun's sake, is sure in time to have the most shapely and enduring body. The person who aims to excel in some one thing rarely has a well shaped body.

Religion Brings Innocent Pleasures. "I have always regarded it as great misfortune to religion that some men have so associated it with unnatural gloom that it became unamiable in the eyes of men, especially of youth. Religion is bright and beautiful, and sanctifies our legitimate recreation, as well as the performance of our most serious acts. I have no sympathy with those who make it a moral straight-jacket and try to crush out the joy of the young heart. No, enjoy life whilst you remain within the domain, and it is a very extensive and lovely one, on the confines of which the angels of conscience and religion stand and say: 'Thus far and no farther.'"—Archbishop Ryan of Philadelphia.

Honely Homilies. When in doubt, don't talk. Prosperity getteth friends, but adversity trieth them. More people should rejoice that they

don't get what they deserve, instead of complaining. It is only through some faults and mistakes that most of us rise to our best and final character.

To-morrow can not furnish an opportunity for the duty you should have done to-day.

Every man's character is what his thoughts are. "As a man thinketh, so is he." The mind is the man. If that be kept pure, a man signifies somewhat. If not, what difference is there between a man and a beast, save that the man has the greater power for the larger mischief?

A Cowboy's Conversion.

An amusing illustration of the adage that all roads lead to Rome is given by the experiences of a missionary in Texas who has since been made an Archbishop. He was on his way to a mission, astride a mule, when the mule, with the characteristic crankiness of its kind, decided to stop and view the scenery. Blows had no effect, and the priest could not adopt the remedy usual under the circumstances—he could not swear at it—so he dismounted and tried diplomacy. It worked like a charm. A cowboy, who had been an admiring witness of the contest, came up to the reverend rector and said:

"See here, Mr. Priest, I ain't never keered for parsons of your stripe, but a preacher that can get ahead of a mule has got grit, and I want to hear you preach!"

The sturdy frontiersman heard the future prelate preach, not only once but many times, asked for instruction, was baptized and lived a staunch, albeit a pugnacious, Catholic.—Catholic World Magazine.

FATHER McCALLEN'S TRIBUTE

TO THE VALUE OF THE "DIXON CURE"

FOR THE LIQUOR AND DRUG HABITS.

On the occasion of a lecture delivered here by a large and appreciative audience, in Windsor Hall, Montreal, in honor of the Father Mathew anniversary, Rev. J. A. McCallen, S.S., of St. Patrick's Church, without any solicitation or even knowledge on my part, paid the following grand tribute to the value of Mr. A. Hutton Dixon's medicine for the cure of the alcohol and drug habit, known as "The Dixon Remedy" by the cure which it has effected under my own eyes. I must come to the conclusion that what I have longed for twenty years to see discovered, has at last been found by that gentleman, namely, a medicine which can be used privately, without the knowledge of even one's own intimate friends, without the loss of a day's work, or absence from business, and without danger to the patient. As I was in a measure, the PHYSICAL CRAVE for intoxicants is completely removed. The greatest obstacle I have always found to success in my temperance work has been, not the want of good will on the part of those to whom I administered the pledge, but the ever recurring and terrible PHYSICAL CRAVE which seemed able to tear down in a few days what I had taken months and even years to build up. Therefore, on this Father Mathew anniversary, do I pay willing and hearty tribute to "The Dixon Remedy" for the cure of alcohol and morphine habits. I do so through a sense of duty towards those poor victims who cry out for relief from the terrible slavery under which they suffer. It is the first time in my life that I have departed from that reserve for which our clergy are noted in such circumstances. If I do so now it is because I feel that I am thus advancing the cause of temperance. (Montreal Gazette, Oct. 25.)

NOTE.—Father McCallen is president of St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society, of Montreal, and the cure which he refers to above can be had of the discoverer, Mr. A. Hutton Dixon, 40 Park Avenue, Montreal, who will send full particulars on application. 1003-2

A Running Sore Pronounced Incurable by Eight Doctors—Cured by Dr. Chase.

Mr. R. D. Robbins, 148 Cowan Ave., Toronto, says: "I had a bad running sore which was simply unsightly. From below the knee to the ankle was one great sore. Eight doctors treated me without benefit. I was induced to try Dr. Chase's Ointment which cured me, and all that remains to be seen are the scars."

Sleeplessness.—This is unhappy in an age of skepticism, but even in this point upon which persons acquainted with me subject agree, namely, that DR. THOMAS' ELECTRIC OIL is a medicine which can be relied upon to cure a cough, remove pain, heal sores of various kinds, and benefit any inflamed portion of the body to which it is applied.

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THE PECULIARITIES OF THIS WORD.

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No name on earth, perhaps is so well known, more peculiarity constructed or more widely imitated than the word DODD. It possesses a peculiarity that makes it stand out prominently and fastens it in the memory. It contains four letters, but only two letters of the alphabet. Everyone knows that the first kidney remedy ever patented or sold in pill form was named Dodd's. Their discovery startled the medical profession of the world over, and revolutionized the treatment of kidney diseases.

No imitator has ever succeeded in constructing a name possessing a peculiarity of DODD, though they nearly all adopt names as similar as possible in sound and construction to this. Their foolishness prevents them realizing that attempts to imitate increase the fame of Dodd's Kidney Pills. Why is the name "Dodd's Kidney Pills" imitated? As well ask why are diamonds and gold imitated. Because diamonds are the most precious gems, gold the most gold precious metal. Dodd's Kidney Pills are imitated because they are the most valuable medicine the world has ever known.

No medicine was ever named kidney pills till years of medical research gave Dodd's Kidney Pills to the world. No medicine ever cured Bright's disease except Dodd's Kidney Pills. No other medicine has cured as many cases of Rheumatism, Diabetes, Heart Disease, Lumbago, Dropsy, Female Weakness, and other kidney diseases as Dodd's Kidney Pills have. It is universally known that they have never failed to cure these diseases, hence they are so widely and shamefully imitated.

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